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DISSERTATION

On the following Subject:

What Causes principally contribute to render a Nation POPULOUS? And what Effect has the Populoufness of a Nation on its TRADE?

BEING

One of Those to which were adjudged the PRIZES

GIVEN BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

The Lord Viscount *TOWNSHEND*

TO THE

UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE,

In the Year 1756:

And read there in the PUBLIC SCHOOLS

On FRIDAY, JULY the 2^d.

BY

WILLIAM BELL, M.A.

Fellow of MAGDALEN COLLEGE.

CAMBRIDGE,

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M.DCC.LVI.

DISSEMINATION

On the 1st of July 1865.

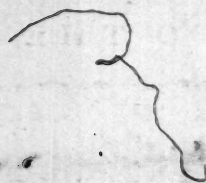
Whereas the Government of the United States has caused to be printed and distributed to the several States, Territories, and Foreign Countries, a certain number of copies of the following Report, to wit:

And

One of the Reports which were adopted by the President.



The said Report, to wit:



And that the said Report is now being distributed to the several States, Territories, and Foreign Countries, in conformity with the provisions of the Act in that behalf passed.

TO
THE MOST NOBLE
THOMAS - HOLLES
DUKE of NEWCASTLE,
CHANCELLOR
OF THE
Univerfity of *Cambridge*,

THE FOLLOWING DISSERTATION
IS,

With the greateft deference and refpect,

Inſcribed, by

HIS GRACE'S

moſt obliged and

moſt dutiful ſervant

WILLIAM BELL.

TO
THE MOST NOBLE
THOMAS-HOLLIS
DUKE OF NEWCASTLE
CHANCELLOR

OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
THE FOLLOWING DISSERTATION

WITH THE GREATEST DEDICATION AND RESPECT

His Grace's

most obliged and

most dutiful servant

WILLIAM BELL.

A DISSERTATION

On the following Subject :

What Causes principally contribute to render a Nation populous? And what Effect has the Populousness of a Nation on its Trade?

Connubiis arvisque novis operata juventus. VIRG.

THOUGH society is absolutely requisite to the happiness of mankind, and was originally entered into with a view to secure it ; yet from considering the numbers of men to be found in most nations, it seems doubtful, whether their political institutions, and prevailing manners, have in fact promoted it so effectually as might have been expected. For upon surveying the whole world, scarce any countries are to be found, however civilized, whose inhabitants are near so numerous as their territories would support. Even those which appear very populous could generally, from the best computations, maintain far greater numbers than they can boast. But were their established forms of government, and general methods of living, of such happy influence as might be wished, this could not have been the case. Did mankind in general experience

ence themselves to be happy and at ease, it seems in the highest degree reasonable to conclude, that their numbers must have increased, in a short time, to a much greater proportion. Their universal love for society, as well as natural desire of offspring, must unavoidably have produced this effect, were there not some real and permanent obstacles, which prevent its taking place. For it can by no means be imagined, that mankind have in reality increased to the extent of those numbers which they are by nature capable of arriving at; or that the scarcity of inhabitants so notorious in several countries, can be owing to any defects or limitations inherent in human nature itself. The constitution of the world alone will not admit of the supposition. When even the minutest parts of the universe seem wisely contrived for their particular uses, our common reason will scarce suffer us to think, that the most noble order of beings it contains should be naturally incapable of fulfilling theirs, by inhabiting, cultivating, and enjoying it. The same goodness, which brought men into being, must needs have intended, that they should be happy, and as numerous, as the world he placed them in could make them.

If we consult experience, and appeal to the testimony of facts, they will evidently warrant the same conclusion, That the want of far greater numbers of men, than are found in most nations, is owing to the manners and customs adopted amongst them; and not to any bounds originally prescribed to human nature. For, not to enter into a minute detail of particulars, there seems great reason to think, that the most considerable



derable part of the world has been much fuller of inhabitants in some former ages, than it is at present. And it has been constantly remarked, that when any sudden calamities have swept off great numbers in a nation, the immediate subsequent increase of the people has been much greater than at other times. Nor is it less observable from modern instances, that in infant colonies the people multiply in a much larger proportion, than in the established, and extremely flourishing, mother country. Whereas at first sight it should seem, that the various difficulties they must have to encounter, would prove very fatal impediments to the growth of their numbers. It is evident, none but political and external causes, distinct from any natural defects, can account for the want of the same increase in a nation long civilized and flourishing; as appears among the refuse and most debauched part of its people, when transplanted into a desert and uncultivated country. To such causes therefore must be attributed the scarcity of inhabitants observable in almost every part of the world; and whatever measures are best calculated to remove them, must principally contribute to render a nation populous.

I. All these external obstacles to the natural increase of mankind, though they may appear in many different shapes, and arise immediately from a great variety of customs and institutions, must center at length in this one fundamental obstruction, The great difficulties men experience in procuring support for themselves, and their families. Wherever this prevails, self-love will deter great numbers from burthening themselves with

the incumbrance of a family; and even a more generous regard for their offspring will have the same effect upon others. But had every man a morally certain prospect of being able by his industry to procure a comfortable subsistence for himself, and his immediate dependants, there can be no reason to imagine, that those passions which are so conspicuous and active in human nature, would not have their full effect; and soon produce a surprizing degree of populousness on the earth. The same desire of promoting our own happiness, which in the former case must necessarily tend to depopulate a nation, would in these circumstances equally contribute to the production of its full stock of inhabitants. This then may be laid down as a fundamental maxim in the present enquiry; That whatever employments, manners, or political constitutions, are calculated to make the necessary supports of life more easily, and more universally attainable, must essentially tend to promote the populousness of a nation.

II. The generality of men every where owe their opinions much more to the influence of prejudice and example, than to any consideration of things themselves. Nor is there any particular in which this influence of fashion appears more conspicuous, than their general notions of the wants, and even the necessities of life. Nature, it is agreed on all hands, has confined their number within a small compass; and designed them to consist of such things, as every one may acquire. But the wanton imaginations of men can industriously multiply them without end, and make
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difficulty in their acquisition the chief allurements to their pursuit. If this once becomes the reigning spirit of a nation, it is obvious what effect it must have upon its future increase. The greater the number is of such things as people in general regard in the light of necessities of life, and the more difficult they are to be obtained, the smaller must be the proportion of those who can possess them. And though they should be in great measure imaginary; that will create little or no difference in the consequences, that must arise from the want of them. Men will pursue their own satisfaction in such enjoyments and possessions as they expect to find it in: and whether their opinions of happiness are true or false, they will studiously avoid bringing themselves into such circumstances, as they imagine must destroy it. It is plain therefore, that in proportion as the fancied requisites of life become more numerous, and difficult to be obtained, those natural inclinations, which if not obstructed would induce every one to marry, will be overborn and extinguished by the opposite, and more pressing influence of self-love. From whence it must readily be acknowledged, that whatever is calculated to preserve a frugal simplicity of taste and manners, to regulate the luxurious fancies, and restrain the fruitless indulgencies of a people; is so far adapted to increase the populousness of a nation.

III. Every member of a society must derive his support either from his own personal industry, or from the labour of others. For the most simple requisites of life being by no means of spontaneous production, but de-

demanding the care and diligence of man to procure, and fit them for his use, industry alone must be the original and real fund for the support of all. The greater proportion this general stock of industry in a nation bears to the whole number of the people, who are to subsist upon it; the greater must be the share of its produce, which every individual may obtain. For if the whole industry of a people taken together is small in respect to their numbers, the produce of it must be so likewise. And this being the whole stock of necessities from which all must be supplied, 'tis manifest that the smaller this is, the more difficult it must be for every one to procure that particular portion of it, which will satisfy his own, and his dependants' wants. On the contrary, the great business of procuring subsistence must become proportionably more easy, as the whole produce of the public labour increases. The general industry of a nation therefore can neither be augmented nor diminished, without sensibly affecting every member of the community, by lessening or increasing the difficulty of supporting a family. And what influence the lightening this burthen must ever have upon the frequency of marriages, among the bulk of the people, we cannot be at a loss to determine. This then seems another truth of great concern in the present question; That whatever serves to create or improve a general spirit of industry in a nation, does in a very high degree promote the speedy and great increase of a people.

IV. Those passions which are natural to man, prevail for the most part with an uniform regularity throughout the whole species, and are attended with similar effects

effects in every age and country. But the prevalency of any particular inclination may be much stronger at some times than at others, as it happens to thwart, or conspire with, the other favorite dispositions and opinions of a people. It cannot be denied, that no passion is more natural to the human heart, or actuates it more strongly, than the desire men have of prolonging, as it were, their own existence in that of their posterity. Nature, that designed the continuance and increase of the species, has planted within them such affections, as are capable of accomplishing so important an end. For this purpose it was manifestly intended, that the necessary duties of parents, which so often involve them in the greatest care and anxiety, should be at the same time the genuine sources of their sincerest satisfaction and delight. These are the chief inducements and rewards which nature has appointed for every man, who undertakes the anxious labours of supporting a family. And where the minds of a people retain their natural bent, and right disposition, experience fully shews, that the hopes of these honest satisfactions are encouragements sufficient for inducing men in general to marry. While the common dictates of modesty and virtue retain a tolerable influence on the generality of a people, and turn their most active and interesting passions into their proper channels, the community will continue to prosper, and its numbers sensibly increase. But it is notorious that the opinions of a nation may be changed, their passions perverted, and the plainest suggestions of nature overruled, by the force of publick example. If the most rational satisfactions, founded on
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the closest ties of blood and friendship, become ridiculed and despised by the higher ranks, they will soon be neglected by the lower; and what the few, who are exalted, condemn, the generality will soon be found to avoid. When a corrupted taste, and dissoluteness of manners prevail, accompanied with an aversion to institutions the most beneficial to society, and even absolutely requisite to its support; the infection will spread its baneful influence, in putting a stop to marriage among the bulk of the people. Whatever therefore promotes a virtuous regularity of manners, and restrains the growth of vice and debauchery, cannot but be greatly instrumental in increasing the populousness of a nation.

These therefore appear to be certain and effectual methods of rendering a nation populous :

The procuring a great plenty of every thing requisite to their support.

The diminishing the number of their imaginary wants.

The universal encouragement and increase of industry.

And the restraining debauchery, and preserving due regard to the principles of modesty and virtue.

There remain yet unmentioned several other particulars, of the same nature and tendency with those which have been explained. But as these comprehend in themselves most of the chief springs, and first principles, upon which the populousness of nations must depend; there seems no necessity for insisting upon many others, which though

though of great use, are of comparatively less importance in the question. Especially as from these general considerations we may be enabled to deduce with certainty particular conclusions; and thus trace out the immediate causes of the increase of a people.

All the variety of occupations, which furnish employment for mankind, may be divided into two distinct sorts: the labours of agriculture, and the arts necessary to life, on the one hand; commerce, with those of elegance and refinement, on the other. It would be needless, as well as difficult, to assign the exact boundaries of these different kinds of arts; as the distinction in general is sufficiently clear and obvious, to warrant any conclusions built upon the nature of either. By the necessary arts must be understood all those, whose principal use consists in facilitating and perfecting the production of all the necessaries of life: by those of refinement, such as are chiefly employed in contributing to the ornaments and elegancies of it. As both taken together furnish all the opportunities men can have for the exertion of their ingenuity or industry, their effects must be of the greatest moment to the subject of the present enquiry, and deserve an attentive and separate consideration.

And first of agriculture, and all such arts as are in any degree requisite to our support.

1. Since they are the necessaries of life only, which mankind can subsist upon; the greater the quantity of these is, which a nation produces, the greater number of people may maintain themselves in it. From this observation alone we may conclude in general, that no country can ever have been populous, while their

lands were in a great measure neglected. It is plain therefore, the state of agriculture in a nation must prescribe limits to its populousness, and afford us a standard to judge of it. Nor is it in a less degree the immediate cause on which it must depend. The natural consequence of a general application to this, and the other arts connected with it, must evidently be the production of a vast plenty of all the necessaries of life. And this, it was before observed, seems of all others the most natural and effectual method of increasing a people. For where all the common supports of life are produced in the greatest abundance, there every single person will be able fully to supply his wants with the utmost ease. And where the whole people, from the highest to the lowest orders, are able by their industry to procure themselves, and their dependants, a sufficient support; it cannot be doubted, but that marriage will prevail universally, and families in general be far more numerous. It is the difficulty of providing for their offspring, which alone restrains men from incurring the necessity of it; and the want and misery which numbers of those labour under, who have families to maintain, is the most considerable hinderance to their increase.

But to place beyond doubt this happy influence of agriculture, and the more necessary arts, upon the growth of a people; let us suppose them, from having been neglected, to become the general study and employment of a nation. Commerce not having hitherto prevailed among them, or being now put an end to, the quantity of current money in the nation will remain the same; but the plentifulness of necessaries

ries must be considerably increased. Now the price of all necessaries must principally depend upon the proportion, which the quantity of current money in a nation bears to the quantity of necessaries produced in it. If money increases fastest, these will become proportionably dearer; but cheaper, if it does not. In the supposed case therefore, 'tis evident the price of all the necessaries of life must fall; because their quantity will be increased, while that of the current money remains the same. But every diminution of the price of commodities produced by labour, must be attended with a proportionable diminution of the price of labour itself. Necessaries themselves can be no sooner grown cheap, but labour will be so likewise. Thus every one, whose industry is to be the support of his family, will experience two opposite effects flowing from agriculture, and the more useful arts. By the cheapness of every thing, that we naturally stand in need of, the support of families will be rendered easier than before. But by the smallness of the price of labour, it must so far be obstructed. Was the disadvantage incurred on the one hand, equal to the benefit received on the other; 'tis evident, that on this account alone, no favourable influence could be derived on the increase of the people. But the truth of the case seems far otherwise. When the value of all commodities as well as labour is diminished, the real decrease of every man's wages can never be more than equivalent to the reduction, in the value, of that particular commodity, which he is employed in producing. For if his wages should not be reduced so much, that commodity would be dearer; and should they be lessened

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more, it would be still cheaper. But the plentifulness of every kind of necessary having reduced the price of all, the real diminution of the expence required to supply the wants of a family, must be proportionable to the whole diminution of the prices of all necessaries put together. For the whole expence of life must decrease, as much as the whole cost of all necessaries is diminished. The advantage, therefore, gained by the great cheapness of all necessaries, is equivalent to the decrease of the price of *All* put together; while the inconvenience resulting from the low price of labour, is equal only to the reduction of that *One*, in which each man is employed. To attempt assigning the exact proportion, which these bear to each other, would be an idle and useless curiosity. Whatever it may be, the great plenty immediately arising from agriculture and the more useful arts, would render the subsistence of families much easier than before.

What influence this would have, as well on the frequency of marriages, as their fruitfulness, is too apparent to need much insisting on. In all nations, where the employments contributing to the provision of food and necessaries, have been forced to give way to the arts of refinement and luxury; the strong propensities of human nature to the preservation and increase of the species, are scarce allowed their due influence in any order of the society. Among the higher ranks they are not uncommonly overborn by a mean avarice, and an ambitious vanity. The excessive dearness of all the necessaries of life is a principal cause of the first; and the absence of those more generous and solid satisfactions, which nature designed for men, makes them fly for
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refuge to the trifling enjoyments of the last. Thus, while the natural affections are deprived of their proper strength and influence, marriage will decline even among those who are well able to support families, and the nation must undergo a proportionable decrease of its people. The same effect which avarice and vanity occasion in the superior ranks of life, poverty and want will produce, at the same time, among the lower. Very few of those, who find it a matter of the greatest difficulty to subsist themselves, will lay themselves under the additional obligation of providing for others. Nor should it be forgot, that among those who do, instances will be far from unfrequent, where their offspring has dwindled away for the want of every wholesome support of life. And even of such of them as by chance arrive at maturity, no small number will become the useless and miserable victims of public justice, for crimes, which the scarcity, arising from the pernicious manners and mistaken policy of the nation, was the original and true cause of their committing.

For these reasons, where the arts of refinement prevail, the scarcity of all things requisite to the subsistence of the people will inevitably be followed by a very considerable diminution of their natural increase: and this evil must continually become more destructive, so long as the works of elegance still grow in esteem. Whereas, when the general industry is turned to the production of food and the necessaries of life, the great plenty produced will immediately remove the chief obstacle to the increase of a people. Nor can its salutary influence cease to operate, till their numbers are enlarged to such a degree, that their whole territories, when

when cultivated to the best advantage, can furnish a certain and plentiful subsistence to no more.

From hence may be seen one principal source of the great populousness of the most flourishing nations, both in ancient and modern times. When Egypt was so famous for the vast numbers of its inhabitants, the production of what was requisite for their subsistence was the chief object of their care. In Palestine likewise, still more remarkable for its multitudes, the same useful labours were the universal occupation of the people. Though in some of the Grecian states agriculture was not reputed an honourable employment for the Greeks themselves; yet in all, they thought it worthy their constant attention, and cultivated their lands to the best advantage by their slaves. And during the happiest times of the Roman common-wealth, these simpler arts were with them also universally practised and esteemed. Nor are their good effects, arising from the plenty they introduce, less conspicuous at this day in the cantons of Switzerland.

2. The second general foundation of populousness already established, next to That of increasing the plenty of real necessaries, was diminishing the number of those that are imaginary. And such a spirit of frugality, and simplicity of manners, will ever be the natural consequence of a general cultivation of the necessary arts. For wherever a taste for elegance and refinement has taken place, a considerable part of the people must always be employed in works of ornament and curiosity. They require the labour of great multitudes to carry them on, as well as the emulation of numbers to improve, and bring them to perfection. Nor, where
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the taste for them prevails, can there ever be wanting incitements sufficient to induce the bulk of the people to neglect the necessary arts, in order to pursue them; as the opportunities they afford for the exercise of ingenuity will procure them greater wages for their labour. It is plain therefore, that in proportion as the employments of real use and necessity are more universally followed, the arts of elegance must decline, and the objects of expence become less numerous, and a more simple manner of living obtain through all the orders of a society.

One remarkably fruitful source of a general thirst after elegance, and a more expensive way of living, is the vain emulation of each inferior rank of people to come nearer to an equality with those above them. This it is, which at length causes the pageantry of life to be thought the most important end of it; and insensibly makes the most obvious superfluities come to be regarded universally as necessities. But this emulation of shew and grandeur prevails no where with such extensive influence, as in extremely large and populous cities. In these, while the immense acquisitions of some make riches the principal object of esteem, the wants of others lay them under a necessity of putting on the appearance of wealth to relieve them. And both in the mean while must have their natural effects upon all orders of the people, in producing a spirit of profusion and extravagance. By degrees the poison will spread itself to the remote corners of the nation: but the original, and real source of it, is always some enormous and destructive city. Even after it has long rioted there, a modest regard to decency and subordination will still be

be preserved in places of less resort and confusion.— But were agriculture, and the more necessary arts, the general employment of a people, no cities could increase to so pernicious a size. For should any such be supposed existing, it is evident that far the greatest part of their inhabitants must be starved for want of employment. A very small number of them would be sufficient to cultivate all the land round them within their reach, and to supply the mutual wants of each other. The rest must separate themselves to a greater distance, to seek for the same employments; otherwise they could not be furnished with labour sufficient to procure a subsistence. Agriculture lays men under the necessity of dispersing themselves, in moderate societies, over the whole country from which they draw their supplies. And by this means, it effectually preserves a modest and due regard to the several ranks and distinctions so useful to society, and prevents the general growth of vanity and extravagance. Nor is it by any means unworthy of notice, that where the miseries of want are removed, and the strongest natural affections of men have liberty to exert themselves on their proper objects; the preservation and care of their offspring will be principally attended to, and all the trifling imbellishments of life much less sought after and regarded.

In the more flourishing times of the Grecian and Roman common-wealths, while agriculture was in highest esteem, they were famous for moderation, temperance, and frugality. These were then the distinguishing characteristics of the Grecian states; and the Romans have left no less remarkable instances of the

the same virtues among them. Their universal application to the necessary arts both naturally produced these effects, and enabled those states to provide for their continuance by some extremely wise institutions. Each of them had their particular magistrates, who were invested with full power to restrain and punish the vices and extravagance of every individual. Besides which, both at Athens and Rome the people were divided by publick authority into distinct classes, according to the different value of their possessions; by which means, the pernicious vanity of inferiors, in imitating those above them, was effectually precluded. But when the refined arts had once supplanted the more simple and necessary; luxury and extravagance became too powerful for the laws; and the censorial dignity at Rome, as well as the power of the Areopagus at Athens, sunk by degrees, and soon became extinct.

3. The third general cause of populoufness was the promotion and increase of industry; on which the support of a whole people, and consequently their numbers must ultimately depend. No greater encouragement to universal industry can possibly be conceived, than every one's being sure of obtaining by it a comfortable subsistence for himself and his family. And it has been already seen, that a general application to the provision of food, and other necessaries, cannot but be attended with this happy effect. From whence it appears, that upon such an establishment of these employments industry will become universal, and most effectually promote the desired end; though the labour incumbent upon individuals will be considerably

less than before. The plenty that must ensue will render the supply of every want a matter of so much ease, that a moderate proportion of their time and pains will furnish an ample provision for all their demands. And thus, both their numbers and happiness will increase together.

4. It was observed in the last place, that depraved principles and a corruption of manners could not prevail at all in a nation, without proportionably preventing the natural increase of its people. It is no less certain, that agriculture and the necessary arts cannot become their general employment, without effectually putting a stop to the growth of licentiousness and debauchery. To be satisfied of this, we need appeal to experience alone. It is notorious, that in nations, where the arts of refinement are in chief esteem, and the manners of the people in a high degree corrupted, none are so little tainted with the general infection, as those who follow these useful and innocent employments. While vice and lewdness, in all their variety of shapes, revel in cities, and flourish among the votaries of elegance; simplicity of manners, and innocence of life, appear conspicuous in the followers of rural and more simple occupations. There cannot be a stronger contrast, than between the fraud and debauchery so prevalent in the one, and the general honesty and regularity of the other. In cities of vast extent, the private offender is hid in the multitudes of the people: and while shame and modesty can have but little influence there over irregular and wanton passions, they abound with the strongest incitements to indulge them. But in the smaller societies, which alone can take place
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where the necessary arts universally prevail, the manners of individuals are unavoidably exposed to the observation of the publick; and will by this means be restrained within the bounds of decency and order.

It appears then, that those arts, by which we are supplied with food and all other necessaries, tend directly to promote the populousness of a nation, by each of the general causes at first established; The plentifulness of every thing requisite to the support of life; the repression of luxury; the universality of industry; and the preservation of virtue and good manners. It is now proper to enquire, in what degree the arts of commerce and refinement (which include every other sort of employment) are adapted to promote the same good effects. By measuring the usefulness of each with the same common standard, their real as well as comparative advantages will be seen in the best light.

1. Some particular instances there may be, where commerce, like agriculture, may increase the quantity of necessaries in a nation. And where this is the case, it must so far have a favourable influence on the growth of the people. But the more immediate effect of it is the procuring a greater plenty of money. As the general object of the useful arts is to enlarge the quantity of all things necessary in themselves; that of commerce is to encrease the plenty of money, with which they may be purchased. The one is a truly natural, the other a kind of artificial method of supplying the wants of mankind. In this particular therefore the real usefulness of commerce, in augmenting a people, will best be seen, by considering how far the same end can be promoted by an increase of money.

The first and almost immediate consequence of an increase of wealth, is a proportional advance of the price of labour, and all kinds of commodities. It will therefore be the means of furnishing individuals with more money to purchase the necessary supplies for their wants, and making this support at the same time more difficult to be purchased. If these opposite effects were equal, they could be attended with no influence at all upon the maintenance of families. But a similar consideration to that already applied to the opposite effects of agriculture, will determine with ease the more prevalent of the two. When things grow dearer, it is obvious the whole increase of the price of any one's labour can be no greater, than the advance upon that particular commodity, in which every man is employed. But the additional expence of living, incurred unavoidably by the same means, must be equivalent to the whole advance upon the price of all the necessaries of life put together. The expences of life must therefore be augmented in a much higher proportion than the price of labour. Hence it is evident, that the growing plenty of money, instead of rendering a subsistence more easy to be acquired, must make every one in reality poorer, whose industry is his only support. For the more plentiful it becomes, the less able he will be to procure enough, by his labour, to supply his constant demands. The plain consequence of which is, that the more commerce flourishes, and the faster money increases, the more indigent must the generality of the people become, and the less able and willing to maintain families. So that the increase of wealth in a nation, singly considered, appears immediately calculated to prevent the due increase of a people.

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This appears plainly the natural consequence of an increase of money alone, without regarding the state of necessaries at the same time. But when commerce and the arts make That more plentiful, These will become more scarce; and their price upon this account likewise must rise still higher. For the numbers, which would otherwise be employed in their production, must unavoidably be diminished by as many as are engaged in commerce and the arts of ornament alone. The cultivation of necessaries falling by this means to a part of the nation only, the common stock of subsistence for the whole will be diminished. For those who are employed in preparing the immediate supports of life, like such as deal in its elegancies, will make their private advantage their principal aim, without any regard to the publick welfare. With this design they will only cultivate their lands in such a manner, that the staple commodities of life may not fail of a high price, and a quick demand. The effects of this will be very sensibly felt by all ranks; but while the affluent can support the burthen, the poorer multitudes will scarce be able to obtain a competency of the wholesome necessaries of life. So that on account of both these inseparable effects of commerce, (the increase of money, and diminution of subsistence) the populousness of a nation will be considerably obstructed.

2. Of a similar pernicious tendency is the introduction of luxury and the various elegancies of life, which cannot but prevail, when commerce and the arts of refinement engage the general attention of a nation. The strong influence of fashion, and that spirit of emulation which shews itself in all orders of people, are principles too active and

and universal to have their constant effects called in question. When commerce has thrown wealth into the hands of many, ambition will make them desirous of being distinguished by elegance and grandeur. This will be followed by an affectation of the same expensive enjoyments among others; which by degrees will extend to each inferior order, and introduce an extravagant manner of living in all. Luxury, vanity, and avarice, scarce ever to be satisfied, will supply the place of frugality, moderation, and contentment. And as all become less able to supply their own numerous and increasing wants, they will be still less inclined to add to them the burthen of providing for families. On the contrary, a very considerable share of the wealth, which might amply support them, will be expended on great multitudes of useless servants, which the taste for magnificence and shew will cause them to maintain in perpetual idleness and celibacy. The arts of elegance therefore cannot be much cultivated in any country, without occasioning a very considerable decrease of marriages: and so long as the spirit of luxurious refinement continues to make its natural advances, they must unavoidably become less and less frequent; and the numbers of the people, instead of being enlarged, keep continually declining.

3. The next point to be considered, is the influence of the commercial arts on industry. — And here they appear with a more favourable aspect, by furnishing employment for great multitudes of people. So far as this particular effect is concerned, they must originally be adapted to promote an increase of their numbers. Nor is it less apparent, that they will in reality contribute greatly to this end, when they are the means of setting a nation to work, which had before given itself

up to sloth and inactivity. They likewise occasion the settlement of a considerable number of foreigners in those countries where they flourish.

But it may with great reason be questioned, whether the same general industry of a people proves as favourable to their increase, when employed on the refined arts, as when on those which are more necessary. The certain introduction of luxury, and the high prices of necessaries, with other no less pernicious effects, which the arts bring with them, must prevent that increase, which would otherwise arise from the industry they create. Though they may help to make a nation flourish for a long period of time, whose government is calculated to preserve them; they will at length be the certain means of their own destruction, as well as of that industrious disposition they at first serve to excite. For this cannot long subsist without moderation and frugality to support it. So that although for some time, they will be greatly instrumental to the increase of a people; yet afterwards, by gradually undermining the publick spirit of activity, they will become the most fatal obstacles to it; and at length remove to some other nation, which has not yet experienced the revolutions they every where occasion.

4. The prejudicial effects of commerce and the arts upon the moral character of a nation have been already seen in some measure, in considering the opposite good consequences of the more necessary employments. Few arguments are required to shew, that the vast collections of people in one city, which those arts are the sole occasion and support of, prove the most powerful encouragements to extravagance and debauchery. They
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not only take away all the checks of modesty, and fear of conviction, but afford the most abandoned associates in their vices, and favourable opportunities to spread and promote them. But it is not by this means alone, that the refined arts prove so destructive to virtue, and introduce an aversion to the most honourable and useful institutions. The dissolute and debauched habits of a people owe their influence, if not their being, to restraints upon the most natural inclinations, to luxury, and to idleness, as well as to the prevalence of publick example. How these several evils are connected with the arts in question has been just made appear; and nothing need be said to shew, that they all conspire to make celibacy a fashionable state, and marriage the general object of ridicule and contempt.

Nor let it be imagined, that the pernicious consequences of a reigning prejudice against it will be either fanciful or inconsiderable. The distinguishing marriage with advantages and honours, and stigmatizing the neglect of it with loss and ignominy, has ever been particularly attended to by the wisest legislators. Lycurgus appointed a certain age, after which it was infamous to continue unmarried; subjecting those who did to shameful penalties; and amongst the rest, the forfeiture of that respect, which was due to their years. At Athens many places of great profit and trust required not only married men, but such as had children, to fill them. Nor were the Romans long without a law, obliging all persons to marry: and when at length the married state was become unfashionable, Augustus attempted, tho' in vain, to bring it again into repute, by all the rewards and punishments in his power to contrive. In
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the earlier ages of the common-wealth, while virtue and the simpler arts flourished together, few laws were sufficient to make it prevail. But after luxury and refinement had thoroughly debauched the minds of the people, the most admirable set of laws proved useless, and unable to support it.

Besides all these principal considerations, it should not be forgot, that whereas the most useful employments are remarkably favourable to health; the more artificial, by producing diseases peculiar to each of them, tend to shorten the period of human life. Nor is the loss of men inconsiderable, which in a course of time must be occasioned, by transporting their productions from one country to another. The dangers attendant upon long voyages, the sudden change of climates from one extreme to another, and an unwholesome method of subsistence, must necessarily sweep off great numbers, and propagate infirmities among many more. To which we may add, that, from a variety of causes, the proportion of deaths is found in fact to be considerably greater in large cities, than in those moderate towns, which alone can be supported by the more simple employments of life.

Upon the whole then it appears, from considering the constant effects of commerce and the arts of elegance and refinement, that they are far less adapted to promote the increase of a people, than agriculture and the more immediately useful occupations. These, by the plenty they produce, make the support of families incredibly easy; Those, from the scarcity they occasion, render it difficult, and to numbers impossible. These tend to confine the fanciful wants of men within

the reach of the bulk of mankind; Those increase them without bounds, and render their desires insatiable. Both originally give encouragement to industry: but in the One, the certain consequence of it will be universal plenty and contentment; in the Other, its benefits will be extremely limited, both in extent and duration. The former employments are eminently conducive to a virtuous simplicity of manners; The latter as assuredly beget licentious and vitiated inclinations, and a contempt for institutions the most sacred and necessary to society. To the first, mankind are indebted for vigorous health and a numerous offspring; to the last, they owe a multiplicity of diseases and untimely deaths.

A nation therefore, which is not as yet fully peopled, will certainly become at length more populous, by applying themselves to the providing of food and all other necessaries of life, than by exerting the same industry on commerce and the refined arts. To render these really conducive to the populousness of a nation, they must not be cultivated till the necessary employments alone have had already their full effect, and are able to produce no further increase of people. This period will not arrive, till they are become so exceeding numerous, that the whole produce of the country, when cultivated to the best advantage, cannot afford a plentiful and certain subsistence to any more. For till then, the same causes, that at first produced any increase of inhabitants, will continue to augment them.

But when a people are once become nearly as numerous as their territories can maintain, for want of sub-

subſiſtence they can increaſe no further (though they may always keep up their numbers) without the introduction of commerce and the arts of refinement. This therefore, *with regard to the Populoſneſs of a Nation only*, ſeems the proper time to introduce them. Under wiſe regulations they may now be made the means of adding much to the publick ſtock of ſubſiſtence, and giving room for a ſtill further increaſe of people. And ſo long as the importation of neceſſaries, and not the improvement of elegance, continues the chief object of their purſuit, ſo long they will in reality produce the deſired effect. But when once their natural conſequences begin to appear (as ſooner or later they certainly muſt) in the production of a luxurious and debauched taſte; the uſeful arts will quickly become in general deſpiſed and neglected; extravagance, ſcarcity, and want muſt ſoon ſucceed; and the numbers of the people at length decreaſe, even far below what they were, when commerce was firſt encouraged to augment them.

The ſuperior uſefulneſs of agriculture and the more neceſſary employments, with regard to the preſent ſubject, being clearly eſtabliſhed; it becomes requiſite to ſhew, what laws and form of government are beſt adapted to ſecure their univerſal cultivation.

Of all political inſtitutions, none ſeems more immediately requiſite for this purpoſe, than an equal diſviſion of lands. For as ſoon as the wants of each are ſatiſfied, which in times of ſimplicity a very ſmall poſſeſſion will be ſufficient for, there can be no farther inducement to cultivate more land. In this caſe therefore, if the property of numbers is much larger than
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their wants require, great quantities of land must remain uncultivated, and a country be deprived of a proportionable number of inhabitants. Wherever this inequality obtains, the introduction of commerce and elegance is the only remedy for its pernicious effects. These, by multiplying the desires of men, will induce such as have large possessions to cultivate them, for the purchase of superfluities; and thus create employment and subsistence for greater numbers than before. But, from what has been already proved at large, they can never increase by these means, so much as they may, where property is equally divided, and the necessary arts principally attended to. There every one will possess and cultivate enough to satisfy his demands; and the same provision will remain for the increase of each succeeding generation, till the country is stocked with as many inhabitants as its produce can support.

But to maintain this equal division of property, so important in the present question, the laws of succession must be carefully contrived to secure it. Wherever it already exists, the increase of the people will be most effectually consulted, by such laws as are best adapted to perpetuate to each family their original possessions. But where a great inequality has taken place, the laws of succession should have a tendency to divide the enormous acquisitions already made, among greater numbers. And in both cases, the right of primogeniture must be abolished, and a more equal division be established between all the children of a family.

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From the strict connexion there must ever be betwixt an equal division of property, supported by due laws of succession, on the one hand; and the increase of a people, on the other; we may see further, what form of government is best adapted to make a nation populous. The tyrannical requires for its very being the greatest inequality imaginable. It subsists but by the extreme indigence of the many, and the immense possessions and power of the few. Tyranny therefore is of all governments the most essentially destructive of mankind; as it is impossible that any nation should be populous, the very power of whose rulers is inconsistent with such laws, as would secure a good cultivation of their lands. In a limited monarchy, there must be lodged somewhere in the people, a sufficient power to restrain the will of the prince. And in whatever order this resides, there cannot but be vested a proportionably large share of property; because without it, no considerable degree of power can long be maintained. From whence it is obvious, that all monarchies have, in some measure, an unfavourable influence upon the increase of a people; though a far less destructive one, than tyrannical power. On the other hand, the very being of republicks is founded upon a general equality of possessions; and their duration must then be most certain, when this equality is best secured. In republicks therefore, all the laws of succession must be framed to preserve it; and their whole œconomy will have a constant and powerful tendency to increase the numbers of mankind.

History and experience confirm what has been deduced from the nature of these institutions themselves.

Whether

Whether we consult ancient or modern times, the most populous nations have almost all been republicks. And in the common-wealths of Greece and Rome, as well as that of the Jews, all the laws of succession were admirably contrived to preserve that equal distribution of property, which had been originally established among them. The former, with this intent prescribed proper bounds to the power of making wills; limited the marriages of heiresses; and allowed such as had no children, to adopt those of others. And Moses was the author of a still more remarkable institution, the year of Jubilee; which rendered it impossible for possessions to be accumulated, not only by succession, but even by purchase.

In answer therefore to the enquiry, *What Causes principally contribute to render a Nation populous?* it has appeared, That the cultivation of agriculture and the necessary arts alone, founded on an equal division of property, and supported by suitable laws, in a well constituted republick, is the only means capable of increasing a small people to the full extent of those numbers, which their country can conveniently support. Yet that, after this point is gained, if the commercial and refined arts are introduced under wise limitations, They may augment a nation still further to the utmost bounds of possibility. But whereas the useful arts will always be able to preserve a people in the same flourishing state, to which they have by their assistance arrived; those of elegance and ornament will, sooner or later, be the means of destroying whatever multitudes they may have raised.

THE former part of the subject having required so full a view of the connexion between commerce and the increase of a people; few words will now be sufficient to point out *The principal Effects of the Populoufness of a Nation on its Trade.*

While the numbers of a people are small, in comparison to the extent of country they are possessed of, it has always been found, that their employments and inventions continue limited to the fatisfying a few natural wants, and the acquiring such conveniences only as are common among themselves. The being able to procure a plentiful subsistence with great ease and certainty, prevents each succeeding generation from attempting to strike out paths unknown to their forefathers; and makes them contented with instructing their posterity in the few useful arts already discovered. By this means, while a country remains but thinly peopled, the fruitfulness of its soil, peculiar productions, and other natural advantages, will be no further cultivated or improved, than is requisite to maintain its few inhabitants in a plain and simple method of living. But when its populoufness is increased in any considerable degree, unless laws are interposed, some advances will gradually be made towards the refinement of life and manners. Instead of continuing to follow indiscriminately the same necessary employments, numbers will begin to indulge the particular bent of their geniuses, in the pursuit of new pleasures and occupations. Curiosity, and an enterprizing disposition, will no sooner have got room to act, than the manners and customs of other nations, within their reach, will engage their attention. In some they will immediately be struck
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with various conveniences, which they themselves have not yet found out, and in others perceive the want of those, which they have. The desire of adding to their own ease and pleasure will soon set them at work to procure the former, by means of a more extensive cultivation of the latter; and thus commerce will be introduced among them, and owe its real origin to the increase of their numbers.

The trade of the whole world may be considered as a certain fund of employment, in which various nations, according to their more industrious application, as well as natural advantages, have possessed themselves of different shares. And since the chief commercial states are rivals to each other in the most important branches of their trade; the proportion enjoyed by each particular nation will necessarily be increased or diminished, as the methods pursued by each, to maintain and enlarge it, are more or less calculated for that end. Those, who answer the intent of commerce most effectually, by supplying the wants of others in the best manner, will successively wrest it out of the hands of its former possessors. This may be accomplished two several ways: either by bringing their respective manufactures to a greater perfection, or affording them for a smaller price than their competitors. As far therefore as the populousness of a nation can contribute to the acquisition of these material advantages, so far must it directly tend to the security and improvement, as well as the introduction of trade.

It cannot be denied, that at least the trading part of mankind are sufficiently attentive to their own private interest, to take advantage of every circumstance for
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promoting it. Hence it has been an observation verified by constant experience, That the fewer persons a merchandize is engrossed by, the higher will be the price demanded for it; and the more hands it falls into, the cheaper it will become. On this account alone, the trade of any nation, even in those commodities which are the peculiar produce of the country, will naturally receive enlargement, and security, from every considerable increase of its merchants and manufacturers. The general demand for things not absolutely requisite will be greatly checked, while the small number of their proprietors affords an opportunity of fixing on them an extravagant price: but their sale will be enlarged proportionably, when the production of greater quantities, owing to more rivals in trade, obliges all to part with them at a more moderate price. And in regard to the security of commerce, it is with whole nations, in respect of each other, as with private traders: those who offer their merchandize to sale for the smallest price, will in time make themselves masters of the trade of the whole world, in their respective branches. They will even dispossess others of the benefit arising from their peculiar commodities; either by working them up at cheaper rates, or supplying the markets with some other less costly manufactures, to answer the same ends. So that in a commercial state, every augmentation of people must prove an additional security as well as enlargement of their trade, by multiplying the number of rivals; who, to compensate for the diminution of their immediate profit, must study every method to render trade more certain and extensive than before.

When a great increase of people has produced this position in a commercial nation, it will soon be attended with considerable improvements in every branch of their former trade, and the introduction of valuable manufactures before unattempted; neither of which would have ever taken place, had not the growing multitude of traders first raised this enterprising spirit, and emulation among them. Manufactures, even in their rude beginnings, are the produce of great ingenuity, and owe their improvements to close thought and surprising invention. We are indebted, as well for the simplest, as the most useful productions of art, to contrivances very remote from common apprehension; and the operations which many undergo before they are finished for use, have been discoveries of the finest geniuses, and such as do honour to human nature. Far from being brought at once to that perfection, which they attain to in trading countries, they require many gradual improvements from the united emulation and industry of great numbers. And the same additional contrivances, which increase their real usefulness and value, tend equally to facilitate their production, and enable the merchant to sell them for a smaller consideration. From all which it appears, that the more populous a nation is, and the larger its numbers are, which apply themselves to the prosecution of trade; the greater variety of manufactures will be carried on in it; and at the same time that they grow more valuable in themselves, be made proportionably cheaper. And on these particulars, it seems evident, the duration as well as extensiveness of trade must in every nation depend.

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Thus we see, that when the populousness of a nation is become considerable, though not so great as to require the whole produce of their lands for subsistence, trade may be carried to a very flourishing height, and become the principal employment of a people. But should they by any means be made so numerous, that their country will scarcely maintain them, or afford room for their natural increase, then it will of course engage, not only the principal, but universal attention. In the former instance, its origin and success will be chiefly promoted by the desire of elegancies, and growing prevalence of luxury: but in the latter, as it will spring from necessity, œconomy must be both its foundation and support. Under these circumstances, its end being to procure the very requisites of life, more than its ornaments, trade will ever be accompanied with a general industry, and a national frugality. By means of the first, a nation so remarkably populous will excel all others in the goodness, and variety of their manufactures; and the last will compensate for all natural disadvantages; by enabling them to undersell others, who, for want of equal difficulties to encounter, have not inured themselves to the same habits of laboriousness and moderation.

It seems therefore, That both the extensiveness and security of trade must every where very greatly depend upon the populousness of a nation; inasmuch as the very being, perfection, and cheapness of all considerable manufactures, have so intimate a connection with it, Nor does it appear possible for commerce ever to arrive at the utmost extent, to which the particular advantages of any country are capable of bringing it; unless

less where it has at first been applied to from necessity instead of choice, and prosecuted from its infancy by a people too numerous for a country to maintain. And of this there will be scarce room to doubt, if we consider only to what a superiour pitch trade has been brought in Holland, when compared with its progress in other nations; notwithstanding the want of every natural production requisite for carrying it on. For it is well known, that it there sprung from indigence, and was nursed in want; a concurrence of circumstances having at first so fully stocked those narrow territories with people, as to render it their only means of support.

From the whole of what has been suggested may be clearly seen a perfect harmony between the true interest of commerce, and the most effectual means of augmenting a people. For as in the first part of this enquiry it was shewn, That no Nation can in the end become as POPULOUS as it is capable of being, unless commerce and refinement are avoided, till the more necessary arts alone have well filled it with inhabitants: so it has in the next place appeared, That TRADE can no where be brought to so flourishing and permanent a state, as where it has from the first been cultivated by an exceeding numerous people.

F I N I S.

